

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

MANAGING BIG EMOTIONS



Many children experience big emotions that they cannot control. This experience of being out of control is called dysregulation. Tantrums and outbursts, as a result of dysregulation, are a normal part of a child's development, and some children have bigger reactions to emotions than others. While these situations can be challenging for caregivers and children, there are methods and strategies that can be used for managing big emotions.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

When kids are overwhelmed by big emotions, the rational side of their brain is generally not accessible. If your child is having big emotions, it is best to help them to calm down before talking to them, or trying to reason with them. Some symptoms of big emotions or dysregulation look like tantrums, challenging behavior, or other outbursts.

Often, children do not want to acknowledge emotions such as anger, sadness or frustration because they have received the message that they are 'bad' emotions. It is important to support a child to acknowledge and express all types of feelings, as acknowledgement will lead them to being able to recognize warning signs when they may need a break in order to prevent dysregulation.

PARENTING TOOLS

- Model acknowledgement of your own feelings, and encourage your child to do the same
- If big feelings occur at predictable times, discuss with your child strategies before entering into those situations so they are more prepared
- Provide warnings for children before transitions between activities (ex. "In time minutes we will have dinner") to prevent outbursts, and give your child time to emotionally prepare
- Do your best to stay regulated and calm when your child is dysregulated. This will help the big emotions pass quicker.

RESOURCES

Please visit essexpediatrics.com/resources/ for links and additional resources.

- [Parent consult clinic](#)

CHILDMIND.ORG

Information about parenting strategies for managing big emotions, and education about why this occurs and how to prevent it

- Calm voices, calmer kids
- Managing big emotions
- How can we help kids with self regulation

APA.ORG

This website provides parenting information about emotional regulation, and how to support children to develop to become emotionally intelligent.

RAISINGCHILDREN.NET.AU

This website includes information about child development and self regulation skills to teach kids, sorted by age and developmental phase.

BOOK: My Body Sends a Signal by Natalia Maguire